

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past thirty years a patchwork of employment and training programs has developed in Missouri. Due to a lack of efficient integration, Missourians have been subjected to a maze of bureaucratic procedures and limited job training choices. Job seekers and employers have not always received timely and reliable information about local labor markets. Poor integration has stymied the development of effective customer service strategies and resulted in an accountability system that measures activities rather than results.

Recognizing the need for an effective system of employment and training programs, Governor Mel Carnahan charged the Missouri Training and Employment Council with the task of streamlining the maze of bureaucratic processes and establishing meaningful measures of accountability. In response to Governor Carnahan's call for ***new directions*** in building a highly effective system of employment and training programs, the Council and the Departments of Labor and Industrial Relations, Economic Development, Social Services, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education began to implement One-Stop Career Centers. Local Interagency Teams and the Private Industry Councils provided strong leadership as One-Stop Career Centers were being designed and implemented.

The One-Stop Career Centers consolidate employment and training services (labor market information, career counseling, job search, referral to training, etc.) at one location in local communities. To better serve Missourians (job seekers and employers), the One-Stop Career Center initiative focuses on: promoting customer choice; providing open access to integrated services; promoting flexibility and innovation in meeting community needs; streamlining service delivery; improving accountability; and engaging the private sector in local operational and policy decisions. One-Stop Career Centers are not a new program but rather ***a new way of doing business***.

In March of 1998, Governor Carnahan took the next logical step in establishing ***new directions*** for the administration of Missouri's employment and training programs by directing that these programs be integrated to create a new Workforce Development System. **[Appendix p. 51]** The Workforce Development System is to be administered by the Department of Economic Development through a new Division of Workforce Development.

***New Directions in Workforce Development*** presents a rationale for integrating employment and training programs into a Workforce Development System and for a new Division of Workforce Development. It is not intended to be a detailed plan for implementation. However, the document introduces the fundamentals of an effective workforce development system, and a framework for increased accountability to Missourians. The One-Stop Career Center initiative is recognized as the foundation for

effectively serving job seekers and employers at the community level. Finally, it lists a number of key considerations for successfully implementing the new Division of Workforce Development.